

**CITY OF DETROIT
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

GUIDELINES FOR GARDEN PERMIT/ADOPT-A-LOT PERMIT

Permit Overview

The City of Detroit has conducted a comprehensive review and revision of the Adopt-A-Lot Permit and worked to balance the needs of the residents with the City's interest. Under the Adopt-A-Lot program, residents are invited to adopt vacant City-owned lots in order to garden or provide landscape beautification and maintenance. Upon approval, the permit grants the resident with access to the vacant City-owned lot for the calendar year. There is no fee for the permit and title to the property is not conveyed to the applicant. All permits expire on December 31st, but can be requested for renewal beginning on November 1st of each year.

Lot Use Guidelines

Compost Piles shall follow the Best Management Practices, and prevent any condition that creates an odor, litter, dust, nuisance, or attracts insects, birds, rodents, or pests. Compost piles allowed on the Lot shall not exceed 3 cubic yards, based on standard composting procedures.

Damage caused to the lot shall include damage to the curb, sidewalk, alleyway, street, or any portion of the right of way and/or infrastructure. Applicant shall contact the Department of Public Works, City Engineering Division at (313) 224-3935 upon the discovery of any damage in order to provide notice and obtain the proper City of Detroit permits for repair. Damage caused to the Lot shall include any major changes (including but not limited to, large holes, ditches, trip hazards, etc.) in the lot condition, but shall not include any minor changes caused by normal gardening and landscaping.

Vicious animals are defined in Section 6-1-1 of the Detroit City Code.

Hazardous materials shall mean any of the following as defined by the applicable environmental laws: Asbestos; hazardous wastes; solid wastes; toxic or hazardous substances, wastes, or contaminants (including, but not limited to, polychlorinated biphenyls, paint containing lead, and urea formaldehyde foam insulation), discharge of sewage or effluent, or any other substance or material that will impact the Lot.

Soils and other materials: Applicant shall not remove topsoil for any purpose, nor add any soil or other material to the Lot without the City's written permission. However, **packaged and sealed topsoil or other garden/landscape material (with product label) purchased from a retailer**, shall be allowed to be added to the Lot with the condition that the Applicant shall be required to maintain receipts and garden records for **four (4) years**, which shall be required to be submitted to the City of Detroit upon request.

Structures: Applicant shall not erect or install any structure (other than temporary fencing) on the Lot. Temporary structures that are easily removable, such as raised beds, hoop houses (under 120 square feet), or rain barrels, are allowed.

Water features are prohibited from being installed on the Lot and shall include ponds, fountains, and any standing water that pose a health and safety risk or attract mosquitoes.

Sealed water systems such as rain barrels, water catchment systems and irrigation systems (*i.e.*, drip tape) can be installed on the lot. Rain barrels shall be assembled with a lid and a sturdy fine mesh to cover all openings to prevent mosquitoes and debris from getting inside and to reduce health and safety risk. Rain barrels shall be placed on a firm, level surface and secured to prevent tipping.

Maintenance: It is also important to provide reasonable watering and maintenance, including lawn mowing, weeding, and removal of overgrown vegetation. Either the wind or a passerby may discard any number of things on the street, sidewalk or neighboring lot that may result in an accumulation of litter on the Lot. Litter and debris is an issue that can be managed as long as removing garbage from the Lot is a constant activity. Not doing so will result in much more garbage or illegal dumping occurring on the Lot. The sidewalks and alleyway should also be kept clear of debris.

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(Rev. 12/2013)